

NARRATIVE AND COMMUNICATION  
AN ATTEMPT TO FORMULATE SOME PRINCIPLES FOR A THEORETICAL ACCOUNT  
OF NARRATIVE

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1. One of the main problems in narrative theory is the theory itself. The rather elementary decision of how to relate certain facts to a theoretical hypothesis seems to be highly controversial in this field and the different theories available appear in some respect to be so barely reliable scientifically that under such circumstances any substantial improvement can hardly be expected. This negative appraisal applies not only to the more old-fashioned traditional views, but even to up-to-date ones - first of all to the different structuralist approaches and to the application of speech act theory which have exerted a decisive influence on modern tendencies in narratology and in literary theory or poetics in general. If we wish to convince ourselves that this opinion is not only a subjective prejudice but an objective and realistic statement concerning the theoretical and methodological perspectives of the present conceptions in narratology, then we have to investigate the modern trends just mentioned. If they prove to be unsatisfactory, we shall have to try to set up an alternative standpoint on the basis of different insights into narrative structure spelled out in different fields of human

knowledge.

2. As to the different structuralist conceptions, this task has been for the most part completed in the theoretical discussions of the last few years: the theoretical and methodological postulations of this trend have been submitted in some studies to a thorough scrutiny and some of the primordial ones have revealed themselves to be badly - founded or unacceptable. The main objection to structuralist theory is labelled the "poetic language" fallacy<sup>1</sup>. "This fallacy asserts that there is a single unified phenomenon 'literature' marked by a property 'literariness' which in turn is expressed or constituted by a special 'literary' or 'poetic' 'language' or 'discourse'. The proponents of this view venture to specify the linguistic character of literary discourse with varying degrees of exactness, the most extreme detailing being Jakobson's famous (1960) formula"<sup>2</sup> Like most of the traditional literary critics and aesthetes the structuralists assumed that there was a homogenous class of objects that could be named as a whole as literature or even art and they wished to define this class by means of a distinctive property characterizing all elements of this class and if possible - nothing other than the elements of this class. This program has failed, however, since we have no distinctive features at our disposal for the definition of the class "Literature" or "art" and we have no hope of solving this problem in the future either, since the failure was due to the neglect of some fundamental conditions. The concepts "literature" and "art"

are historical categories, they represent abstract unities (family-resemblance notions) of language-games, respectively semiotic games of which human communities could be aware only at a certain level of their cultural and economic development. The content and extension of these concepts have been continuously changing, and an allembicing definition cannot be given contained within this real historical process. This means that the postulated unity of class remains problematic and if the existence of the class itself raises doubts it seems an ontological audacity to assume that there are distinctive properties defining the elements of the class which, may be, does not exist. The impossibility of the structuralising aim is explicitly stated in the following theses of Searle: "First, there is no trait or set of traits which all works of literature have in common and which could constitute that necessary and sufficient conditions for being a work of literature. ...

Secondly ... 'literature' is the name of a set of attitudes we take toward a stretch of discourse, not a name of an internal property of the stretch of discourse...

Third, the literary is continuous with the nonliterary."<sup>3</sup>

The fact that these alleged features are conceived of as elements of a special poetical language has to do with the methodological hypothesis that linguistic procedures can be applied in an analogical way to literary structures. Beyond doubt it is owing to the use of linguistic and other semiotic methods that structuralist poetics and narratology have



achieved their most important results, however the structuralist conception of language and its analogical application to literature and narrative have led necessarily to certain contradictions preventing the discovery of the inner connections of literary and narrative structure. The main thesis consists of the idea that literary features, just like grammatical ones, function as elements of an abstract system, a variant of the Saussureian langue which, over and above the fact that it has been realized, has no connections with the sphere of living discourse, its phenomena being cut off from the world of parole. Since the pragmatological turn in linguistic theory this conception is no longer considered even inside linguistics as generally valid and although it is possible to grasp in this way certain poetic relations, by this principle we are compelled not to take into consideration on the level of theory any socio-cultural factor and thus we can offer only a very one-sided picture of our topic. These objections to theory and praxis in literary and narrative structuralism are certainly not new and some of the representatives of this approach seem to have been aware of the theoretical shortcomings of this trend for a comparatively long time but they seem to assume that for this field of research there is no better method available.<sup>4</sup> Others, meanwhile, do not lose their faith in the scientific and humanistic significance of structuralism.<sup>5</sup> Since we agree with the criticism of structuralism carried out from a pragmalinguistic standpoint we cannot claim that clinging to structuralist positions is a prosperous strategy. In spite of valuable results, narrative

theory, conceived of on a structuralist basis, needs a thoroughgoing theoretical revision.

3. It is a symptom of the dependance of poetic and narrative theories on linguistic theory that this criticism of structuralism in poetics is a consequence of the already mentioned pragmatical turn in linguistics and not an issue of investigations in this so eminently pragmatically determined field of research. This pragmalinguistical turn applies, not to a well-founded and explicit theory of language based on pragmatic categories, but to a diversity of several trends and fields of research such as sociolinguistics, text theory, Wittgensteinian linguistic philosophy, speech act theory, etc. Although most of these pragmatically-oriented schools are far from the solution, sometimes even far from a satisfactory theory formulation of their own specific problems, they have exerted in one way or another a certain influence on literary theory. Thus one may detect the importance of Labov's, Sacks's, Tchengloff's etc. sociolinguistic research for the new poetic project in Fowler (1979) or Pratt (1977), or one may extrapolate the consequences of a general text model like Petőfi (in print) for a literary theory, and one may appraise the attempt at a systematization of the different pragmatical tendencies in Schmidt (1980). However, of all these conceptions only the speech act theory was able to impress literary study in a way that we can now speak about an international trend influenced by speech act theory in this field. It is certainly not accidental that exactly this approach has been gaining ground:

it offers a plausible explanation for the connection between linguistic phenomena and human interactions and has introduced in this way the very realistic point of view in linguistics, that linguistic utterances should be considered not only as manifestations of an abstract system but in the last analysis as goal-oriented actions. It seems rather needless to account for the different positive theoretical innovations invented by speech act theory - they are generally known and acknowledged - but on the contrary, before giving an appraisal of the application of speech act theory to literary and narrative theory we should like to formulate some general caveats against certain badly founded suppositions. This reservation notwithstanding, we do esteem the endeavours of speech act theory in revealing the inner relations between speaking and doing. In full agreement with Bierwisch (1979) we find that speech act theoretical research strategy is based upon some questionable postulates. Bierwisch pointed out that proponents of this theory assume that the specification of the illocutionary force connected with the utterance often is a linguistic task which can be carried out through the analysis of the illocutionary force indicating device (IFID) contained in *t*. However the interaction conditions identified by IFID represent only a special part of a whole, the structures and functions of which cannot be grasped under the aspect of this part; on the contrary, the part is accessible only through full knowledge of the whole. This means that there is missing here a theoretical accounting for linguistically relevant interactions comparable

to the conception worked out for action theory in Castañeda (1975) and there are no means available in speech act theory to overcome this difficulty. It is another question whether the required theory of interactions should be considered as an integrated part of linguistics or rather as a special non-linguistic theory having certain correlations with linguistic research: a general overview is needed anyway if a special detail has to be elucidated. A second remark applies to the characteristic conflict between the pragmatistical point of view of the analysis and the attempt to formulate generally valid relations, that is, independent from pragmatistical considerations. We certainly do not mean correct formulations of universal quantification in a pragmatic context but the fallacy of which most of the representatives of the theory seem not to be aware is that they require a greater generality for their theses than is due to them.

4. In the application of speech act theory that should be here investigated as a representative of the pragmatically oriented conceptions we have to face a rather controversial trend: there is no agreement about fundamental definitions, the goals that should be achieved and the methods that should be applied. These difficulties seem to be connected with the special use of language in the different poetic language games which are highly divergent from uses of language considered as normal in speech act theory. Searle declares even the existence of fictional discourse to be a paradox from this point of view.<sup>6</sup>

4.1. First of all we have to be conscious of the fact that Searle's above mentioned position concerning the indefinability of literature is not at all a generally accepted thesis in the speech act theory of literary research, and the majority of representatives of this trend would like to define the essence of literature according to the old tradition. The novelty consists in that the definition should not be carried out by means of distinctive features of the poetic text class alone but mainly in view of its characteristic use. In Austin's classical series of lectures<sup>7</sup> this use is defined as a sort of deviation, as an "etiolation of language" a use which is "parasitic upon normal use"<sup>8</sup> and a line of research can be characterized as an attempt to force a practically applicable concept from this negativity. So Ohmann connects the notion of the speech act with the rather old, but hotly debated concept of "mimesis" in his special term for literary texts "Imitation speech acts". Its introduction can be explained by the fact that the conditions of appropriacy for speech acts fail to apply to literary utterances since the latter do not have illocutionary force - for unlike a statement in a scientific text a statement in a literary text does not count as an undertaking to the effect that the propositional content represents an actual state of affairs. "A literary work is a discourse whose sentences lack the illocutionary forces that would normally attach them. Its illocutionary force is mimetic. By 'mimetic' I mean purportedly imitative. Specifically, a literary work purportedly imitates (or reports) a series of



speech acts, which in fact have no other existence."<sup>9</sup> This mimetic function of literary texts is, according to Ohmann, due to the suspension of normal illocutionary forces which "tends to shift a reader's attention to the locutionary acts themselves and to their perlocutionary effects."<sup>10</sup> Describing literary discourse as a quasi speech act Ohman has double aims, for on the one hand he would like to demonstrate the use of the speech act theory for literary analysis, and on the other he has to account for the obvious contradiction between literary language use and language uses that are considered as conforming to the norms specified in speech act theory. In this way we are permitted to rewrite the text as series of quasi speech acts and we can formulate some correlations derivable from the speech act transcription of the text.<sup>11</sup> This treatment of the text is, however, burdened with a lot of serious theoretical problems. We are told that the speech acts in literary texts are imitated and it happens that the reader imagines a speaker, a situation, a set of ancillary events, and among other things the intention of the speaker. The text in itself - especially if it is presented in written form, without the background of the communicative situation, the addresser, the objects which have been referred to etc. - does not represent a sufficient base to determine unambiguously the intended type of illocutionary act and a consensus seems to be completely impossible if the reconstruction of the communication situation considered to be fictional is surrendered to the individual readers. Doležel is right if he speaks in connection

with the literary application of speech act theory about "intentional fallacy" and points out: "Imperceptably the speech act concept has been assimilated to the traditional concept of the intentionalist critics."<sup>12</sup> The formula offered by Searle for fictional discourse the homogeneity of which incidentally seems to be rather questionable viz. "a pretence to perform a speech act"<sup>13</sup> can be considered a variant of the above-mentioned conception.

4.2. Another important source for a theoretical explication and analysis of literary discourse conceived of as a social act that manifests itself in a special use of language can be found in Grice's lecture *Logic and Conversation*<sup>14</sup> where a general Cooperative Principle has been formulated for conversations carried out in natural language and special implications, not derivable through pure logical methods, were accounted for as different sorts of infringements of the Maxims of the Principle. Grice's conception is without doubt a valuable contribution to the explanation of language, and the fact that Castañeda starting from quite different connections came to very similar dialectical principles concerning language use<sup>15</sup> underlines the rationality of this approach. The above-mentioned problem of intentionality that cannot be ignored in connection with the understanding of utterances can be successfully solved to some extent. It is, however, rather questionable whether Grice's conception can function as a model for literary theory. Although Grice's lecture ascribes rather too much validity and

generality to its maxims and principle we can find even in Grice's text some argument against such an application of his Cooperative Principle. Grice declares namely "that observance of the CP and maxims is reasonable (rational) along the following lines: that any one who cares about the goals that are central to conversation/communication (e.g., giving and receiving information, influencing and being influenced by others) must be expected to have an interest, given suitable circumstances, in participation in talk exchanges that will be profitable only on the assumption that they are conducted in general accordance with the CP and the maxims."<sup>16</sup> Conversation defined in this way does not apply to any type of exchange but only to a class of exchange and the CP with the maxims can be regarded as a pragmatical code identifying this special genre of communication of which types like quarreling and letter-writing are explicitly excluded.<sup>17</sup> To maintain that the same principle and the same maxims apply to literature means that literature belongs to the above-defined class of talk exchanges. That is exactly the main point in Pratt (1977) where, with reference to identical features in the literary and non-literary use of language, it is generally denied that there is any essential difference in communicative respect between literature and "normal" communication, therefore literature cannot lay claim to represent a separate form of communication and is in its entirety explained by the Cooperative Principle and its various infringements rendered possible by supplementary pragmatical conditions and realized as different

sorts of implicatures. This view is, however, completely erroneous. First, it is clear that the special class of exchanges labelled as conversation applies to a face-to-face communication which is characterized by a special type of communicative situation, that is, by the simultaneous presence of addresser and addressee under circumstances permitting natural and direct oral and kinetic communication. Literary communication cannot be identified as such even if we disregard its possible realization through print and the mass-media and cling to primordial oral transmission. Pratt believes her endeavour to reduce the poetic and conversational use of language to a common theoretic base is threatened only by the structuralist dichotomy of "poetic language" versus "ordinary language" and fails to take into consideration all the empirical facts which contradict such a unification. As a matter of fact the structuralist theory does not represent in the communicative respect a real counterpole to Pratt's ideas, since poetic and ordinary communication have been accounted for by the same communication schema, the differences being attributed to the different distribution of the communicative factors principally present in both cases of communication. Instead of this communication model which is rather insensitive to the factual aspects of communication we should consider the attempts to formulate a typology of utterances on the basis of certain variable factors of the communicative situation. Such an approach can be found in Wunderlich (1970). Wunderlich works with binary features some of which apply to the characteristics of the message such as + fiction, + dialogue,

+ order, others determine the space-time relation of addresser and addressee by + delay, + distance. We are given fifteen different communication forms altogether, each of them characterized by a set of features. The representative class for literature mentioned here as "novel, play, poem" takes the form

(+ delay) (+ distance) (+ fiction) (- dialogue) (- order)  
while conversation is denoted in the following way:

(- delay) (- distance) (- fiction) (+ dialogue) (- order)<sup>17a</sup>  
There is a difference in all but one feature, therefore it is precisely the communicative factors which preclude the possibility of the unification. One may certainly wonder how relevant the classification presented in Wunderlich (1970) actually is. Are these features sufficient in number? Sandig takes twenty into account instead of the five mentioned here, but success or failure of a classification does not depend on the number of the reflected elements alone. Are the features chosen in a consistent way? For want of a satisfactory theory of the communicative situation we are inclined to consider the above model as a provisory solution, as it is certainly unacceptable to define literature as a whole, semantically as a class of fictional texts. We do not wish to continue the discussion of the problems of this approach.<sup>18</sup> We should like to point out that in spite of its theoretical failures and its vagueness it succeeds in spelling out by the cooccurrence of the features (+ Delay) (+ Distance) which are in fact determined by actual factors of the communicative situation

an old truth of literary theory with discernment, namely that addresser and addressee in a literary communication are obviously not characterized by the same space-time coordinates. Consequently literary communication cannot be subsumed to face-to-face communication or its subclass, conversation. A second argument is connected with the semantical content of the definition of conversation. We have seen that the Cooperative Principle has been stated in respect of certain purposes. "I have stated my maxims as if this purpose were a maximally effective information."<sup>19</sup> Information is taken here not in the generality which applies to it as a term of information theory, but as a message related to the actual world. The conversation has truth-conditions for the actual world. In a way there exists a possibility of reinterpreting the terms "informative" or "true" in the different maxims in a different way, so as to include a dada poem and a rational answer in a conversation and event that a narrator believes to be true in his fictional world, but this would annihilate the rationally distinguished class of conversation. On the other hand if the definitions are taken in their original sense, since most literary forms are not interested in conveying information about the actual world in a direct way, none of the maxims can be applied felicitously to them, that is, the formulation of the Cooperative Principle itself excludes its general application to literary communication. An example for a reinterpretation of the Cooperative Principle for literary communication was

offered in van Dijk (1976), but according to our arguments this cautious way of integrating Grice's conception is as mistaken as its direct application in Pratt (1977). The full array of the different attempts at a poetological rendering of speech act theory has not at all been exhausted by this short analysis. (cf. in this respect Fanto (1978))

We hope nevertheless that we could make comprehensible the main problems of the whole approach which can be summed up in that the original framework of speech act theory does not provide for the complexity of literary communication, therefore there is no real theoretical base underlying statements concerning poetical or narrative structures which in the majority of cases rest on an analogical inference.

5. We have considered an example of each of the two main tendencies determining contemporary research in poetics and narratology, the one laying stress upon the correlations of a basic abstract system, the other upon pragmatic determination of language in the sense of use and action; however, the results have been in both cases rather discouraging. What is surprising is that our objections apply in each of these rival trends to the insufficiency of grasping the pragmatic factors of the communication, therefore if we want to formulate an alternative theoretical standpoint we should put this question in the foreground. In expounding our ideas about narrative and communication we proceed in the apparently cautious way that we start by referring to the highly valuable scientific results of some research-groups which have dealt

with different problems of literary communication and narration. The explicit citation of these impressive conceptions is meant to be more than a due fulfillment of an obligation. In a way it is astonishing that as far as literary theory is concerned the same discussions that are going on nowadays between representatives of structuralism and pragmalinguistics have already been held and, as to their intellectual level, the contemporary ones could be considered as mere preliminaries to some studies written half a century ago. This abnormal situation proves the insufficient interest of present research in the history of science and it can be overcome only if the relevant conceptions are taken into consideration in an appropriate way.

5.1. These remarks concern first of all the activity of the Bakhtin-circle expressing from the early 20's on a very individual synthetization on a semiotic basis of the two important trends in Soviet literary theory: Formalism and the sociological approach. Communication and socio-culturally determined uses of language are central categories of this conception that takes a stand on primary pragmatic causality in literary works and comes in this way into collision with Formalism documented in different critical studies.<sup>20</sup> Bakhtin, Vološinov and Medvedev pointed out that the Formalists main reference point in linguistics is based on the concept of a unique and abstract linguistic system and can therefore elucidate only some secondary traits of literary works, since



the latter do not rest upon this highly idealized linguistic concept but upon the socio-culturally determined uses of language in different communities. Instead of the linguistics of langue of the formalist-structuralist tradition there now appears, with reference to Humboldt, a multilingual conception of word (slovo) which should not be confused with the Saussurian parole as it is conceived to be out of the scope of linguistics and to represent a sort of paralinguistics reflecting all those socio-cultural settings in which communication proceeds. The sphere of slovo mirrors the reality of communication in its pragmatic setting. Its multilingual character can be explained by the fact that the dialectical, etc. varieties spoken in different socio-cultural communities are not considered any more as parole-phenomena, that is they are not derived from an underlying abstract langue-structure, but their heterogeneity corresponding to sociocultural, ideological and other pragmatical stratifications of the langue-user communities is held to be a primordial fact serving as a starting point for any theoretical and practical analysis of language. The substitution of the unique and abstract langue-system by a multitude of systems reflecting the different pragmatic relations between the communities offers new perspectives in most branches of linguistic and paralinguistic research; in some this change makes it possible to formulate a theory of a completely new type. To this set of candidates for a theoretic reformulation belongs stylistics: the idea of an ensemble of pragmatically determined linguistic systems seems to be very illuminating, for stylistic correlations and

some recent suggestions aiming at an embracing account for stylistics through pragmatic connotation<sup>21</sup> can be considered as formally fuller variants of this basic supposition. Due to its sensitivity to the world of slovo stylistics becomes in any case a very important field of research for the Bakhtin-circle,<sup>22</sup> stylistic analysis plays here in some respects the same role that was given to linguistics in the formalistic approach. The new pragmatic orientation has great importance for narratology as well. Some of its genres - certain novel-types - are identified as an expression of social consciousness of the multilingual character of the verbal means of communication and, besides this circumstance, other factors of the communicative model have contributed to the elaboration of valuable typologies.<sup>23</sup> Let us quote a characteristic passage: "The fundamental types of compositional-stylistic units building up in general the novel as a whole are the following:

1. Author's direct literary-artistic narration (in all its different varieties),
2. different stylized forms of oral every-day narration ('skaz'),
3. different stylized forms of semi-literary (written) every-day narration (letter, diary, etc.),
4. different forms of the author's literary, but not artistic discourses (ethical, philosophical, scientific exposition, rhetoric declamation, ethnographic description, statement in an official report, etc.),
5. stylistically individualized discourse of the heroes.

After having got into the novel these stylistic units of different origin form a well organized artistic system and are submitted to the higher order stylistic unity of the whole which itself cannot be identified with the units underlying it."<sup>24</sup> A novel is accordingly multilingual not only in the sense that it can mediate the vernacular of different communities but also by the fact that it is modelled on a series of primordial communication forms conventionalized in the use of certain groups. Since the elucidation of complex forms depends on the clear distinction and explication of the constituents we have first of all to account for these primary forms in narratology together with some other basic problems.

5.2. The investigation of these primary forms leads us to evaluate the endeavours of ethnography to define some elementary genres in oral literature and discourse in general. Jolles (1930) offers on a morphological basis a theory of so-called simple forms, that is the nine natural, universal and ultimate genres that have generated all the other kinds of literature. This "theory of the formation and transformation of genres" is based "on three fundamental ideas:

1. Language has an inherent ability to transform words into forms, under precise conditions. This process is a fundamental activity (Geistesbeschäftigung).
2. Words crystalize into forms centering around distinct fields of meaning (Bedeutungsfeld).

3. The genre is transformed into a new, often more complex, type which corresponds in meaning to the earlier kind."<sup>25</sup>

Jolles's idea of deriving the immense variety of folkloric genres from a limited number of primordial simple forms and to account for the variety by transformation sounds in some respects very tempting, however he could justify the necessity and sufficiency of the chosen forms of the repertoire only in view of metaphysical meditations that have nothing to do with the empirical facts which can be observed in connection with the communication of these genres. There are a lot of other theoretical and methodological problems:<sup>26</sup> here we mention only the postulated universality of simple forms: it can be maintained only if the subsistence of an inborn paralinguistic deep structure determining all simple forms is presumed that is differently realized according to linguistic and cultural codes. We do not wish to repeat our arguments against the pragmatic insensitivity of structuralist theories, therefore we take only some late reformulations of the genre-concept, of simple forms respectively, into account which lay stress upon the communication. The main trend of these endeavours, in some respect largely prepared by several structuralist essays<sup>27</sup>, is to substitute the metaphysical postulations by well-founded theories based on empirical facts and to give up the use of notions whose existence is ontologically suspect. Hymes (1972) is a rather characteristic attempt in this sense: he tries to give a theoretic account of the notion "communicative competence" in applying the main

categories of generative transformational grammar to the interaction of language and social life. Hymes' point of reference is not an idealized native speaker, but a concrete speech community defined as "a community sharing rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech and rules for the interpretation of at least one linguistic variety."<sup>28</sup> Speech is defined as an activity carried out by the members of the socially defined community in a speech situation. A realization of such an activity governed by rules or norms for the use of speech is a speech event and its minimal term is a speech act - its relation to the central term of speech act theory is not clarified. Hymes distinguishes different speech styles and ways of speaking. In the process of communication the following "components of speech" are differentiated:

1. Message form,
2. Message content,
3. Setting (time and place of a speech act)
4. Scene (psychological setting),
5. Speaker,
6. Addressor,
7. Hearer, receiver or audience,
8. Addressee,
9. Purposes-outcomes,
10. Purposes-goals,
11. Key (tone, manner, spirit in which the act is done),
12. Channels (choice of the medium of transmission or speech),
13. Forms of speech (dialect, code varieties),
14. Norms of interaction,

15. Norms of interpretation,

16. Genre<sup>29</sup>

Some of these components need not be realized in each speech event by a special factor, so for example, substituting the rigid and traditional division between speaker (sender) and hearer (receiver) specifications for participants given in 5-8. represent possible roles that are according to genre-specific requirements differently realized: "Some rules of speaking require specification of three participants (addressor, addressee, hearer (audience), source, spokesman, addressee, etc.), some of but one, indifferent as to role in the speech event, some of two, but of speaker and audience (e. g. a child), and so on."<sup>30</sup> The component genre has a double function: its introduction as a component of speech reveals that any intelligible speech event should be conceived of as being classifiable to some conventionally determined genre,<sup>31</sup> on the other hand it is not considered as a component like the others, but should be derived from the information offered by the other components. In this sense genre signifies competence concerning the whole communication process, comprising not only the ability to formulate a text of a certain type but also the consciousness of social and behavioral norms connected with utterances of a certain type in a given speech situation. In consequence of the reference to language use in socioculturally determined communities, the central category of generative transformational grammar, competence reflects connections that were originally thought to belong

to performance and in this way we can grasp some important characteristics of these special forms of communication. Of the three important structural levels in folklore forms - structure of materials, dramatic structure, and structure of context - the genre continuum presented in Abrahams (1969) is situated on the last, that is, it considers the possible relationships of speaker and listener. "... the range of performer-audience relationships ... runs from the personal interactions of conversation to the total distance or 'removal' of performer from audience, as in the presentation of objects of art like a folk painting. Between the poles of interpersonal involvement and total removal are four discernible segments of a spectrum into which folklore genres tend to group themselves in terms of describable traits of performance. These are conversational genres, play genres, fictive genres, and static genres. The progress from the more interpersonal to the more removed involves a passage from the smaller and more intimate forms as part of direct and spontaneous discourse to the larger and more symbolic genres, which rely upon a profound sense of physic distance between performer and audience. The shorter forms employ fairly direct strategies that rely on the intensity and color and concision of manipulated materials to do their convincing. Though all folklore calls for a sympathetic relation between formal object (the item of folklore) and audience, the longer genres increasingly draw upon vicarious, rather than immediate, involvement to induce the sympathetic response"<sup>32</sup> We have consequently to distinguish

two different structures: the one is contained in the text conveyed during the communication, the other applies to the participants of the speech event; speaker, addressor, hearer, addressee are in some way involved in a game that should be played according to the conventions that are valid in the community. The main point is that genre is constituted on this second level. In a sense Grice's notion of conversation defined by his principle and maxims can be conceived of as a genre, belonging to a different genre signifies having to apply different criteria of appropriateness: "When a person in our society retracts his words by saying 'I was only joking', he actually redirects his words via another genre. Whatever he said violated the rules of regular conversation but is allowed in the genre joke."<sup>33</sup> Therefore in investigating genres we have to state social and behavioral norms and beliefs connected with the use of utterances of that type,<sup>34</sup> but at the same time we have to rely - especially in the case of encoded shorter forms - on specific features of the linguistic structure.<sup>35</sup>

5.3. Finally we have to encounter the question of how a communication can be enacted that is characterized by distance and delay. Since we are considering oral communicative forms no special instrumental storage from writing to mass-media can be taken into account, these technical means having brought about historically secondary forms of communication in view of which our highly important question is generally dismissed. The problem in the foreground is the



special organization of the primary oral forms of the communication of genres that are commonly summed up in an unsatisfactory way by the term literature and this is connected with a bundle of historical, cultural, sociological, ethnological, informational, theoretical etc. questions applying to diverse aspects of this social activity. A theoretical account of this problem can be offered only on the basis of empirical field research carried out in order to reveal in a certain respect some general traits of this connection. Important results have been achieved in this respect by Parry's and Lord's oral formulae school, classically resumed in Lord (1960); after having performed intensive empirical work in communities with a living oral tradition they pointed out the idleness of modelling oral forms of literary communication on face-to-face communication in a conversation or on secondary instrumental forms and they offered a genuine explanation for this theoretic foundation giving a remarkable impulse to a wide range of examinations from literary history to sociology of thought. The main idea is that the singer's (narrator's, addresser's) activity cannot be satisfactorily characterized as the performance of a text which has been previously composed by one or more authors (speakers), "the performance is a moment of creation for the singer".<sup>36</sup> In spite of the conventionalized character of content and form of the conveyed text and the close connections of its use to special social events and communicative conditions - as in the Yugoslavian heroic songs where the precondition was a special gathering of men in a coffee house or a tavern mainly

on holidays<sup>37</sup>. - All the same this sort of communication seems to be a direct one like a face-to-face communication; it requires, however, special learning and training: not every member of the community has of the ability to perform a song according to the norms, rather the mastery of this poetic self-expression is reserved for some specialists. Due to his individual sensitivity to linguistic expression and to his continuous practice the singer is capable of using freely a language which is understandable and in principle learnable for all, although in reality it is not acquired on a high degree except by a few. The most important constituent of the grammar of this special "poetic" language is, according to Parry and Lord, the formula, that is, a metrically, rhythmically, syntactically, semantically, etc., regular unit of speech; speaking the poetic language means composing a coherent whole out of a number of different formulae.<sup>38</sup>

The formula with all the varieties derivable from it can be conceived of in the sense of a generative grammar: corresponding "phrases would be considered not a closed 'system' but an open-ended 'family', and each phrase in the group would be considered an allomorph, not of any other existing phrase, but of some central Gestalt ... which is the real mental template underlying the production of all such phrases. The Gestalt itself ... would seem to exist on a preverbal level of the poet's mind."<sup>39</sup>

We become aware of the importance of the explanation of this special communication form if the latter is considered as a

social institution carrying out the storage and transmission of different regulations which constitute the special way of life in a community having no instrumental facilities of communication. In connection with the preliterate Greek culture Havelock (1977) points out: "This information could be carried only in the form of statements imprinted upon the memories of individual brains of living Greeks ... these statements preserve themselves without alteration, and so retain authenticity ... if they are cast in metrical form, for only as language is controlled by rhythm can it be repeated with anything like the uniformity that is available in documentation. ... What we call 'poetry' is therefore an invention of immemorial antiquity designed for the functional purpose of continuing record in oral cultures."<sup>40</sup> The birth of poetry that is in general traditionally accounted for in magic and irrationalistic terms is explained here in a rather illuminating and rationalistic way and not only rationality speaks for this solution but a number of observations and psychological experiments.<sup>41</sup> As a matter of fact the challenge manifested in social needs in effective storage and continuous transmission of different kinds of socially important information could be met in a reorganization of the conveyed message in the oral communication process: it was necessary to work out a selection mechanism to optimally guarantee memorizable messages and these were texts complementarily structured by different sorts of repetitions at the same time avoiding the effect of banality. This means that the set of rules identified as the sphere of the alleged poeticity investigated by structuralists

as an immanent realm of literary form reveals there is a consequent strategic answer given by the community in a zero-sum game against Nature. Thus poetry and the grammar of poetry lose their aura of immanence, they have to be thought of rather as the products of some socially intended actions having their origin in social needs and dangers.

This insight gives us the possibility of arriving at a realistic reconsideration of the structuralist - pragmatist linguistic discussion that served as the starting point of our explanations. The position of "either - or" seems to be out of place, since the two view points do not represent in the last analysis contrary standpoints. Accepting the priority of the socio-cultural determinism of poetic language games does not require us to give up our knowledge concerning abstract linguistic and poetic rule-systems, because they reflect and explicate real social knowledge. Although as an explanation of language and literature the structuralist view proves to be too narrow and methodologically in need of revision it represents the most valuable and living tradition in literary theory. Pragmalinguistics should not mean a completely new beginning, but an organic and at the same time critical continuation of this tradition.

6. This unusually large introduction which has given us the opportunity of explaining the main aspects of our conception on a number of questions makes it possible for us to formulate our ideas in a short and concise way on some theses. In a sense

they represent the recapitulation of our previous exposition.

1. Narrative is generally used as a structuralist term and is applied as such to delimitate or characterize syntactically-semantically a certain class of texts disposing of an action structure and having agents and patients as grammatical subjects and objects.
  - 1.1. Narrative has no pragmatic reality and just like literature represents a family-ressemblance notion
2. Pragmatically an utterance appears to be an action carried out by the participants in and through the communication.
  - 2.1. The type of the action is called genre and is defined according to the textual and behavioral strategies applied during the communication.
3. The primary pragmatic characterization of an utterance consists of its identification as a genre, which means accounting for the criteria of appropriateness, social and behavioral norms etc. under which the communication of the utterance counts as successful.
  - 3.1. The syntactic-semantic term narrative is abstracted from a series of pragmatic genres.
  - 3.2. Although some syntactic or semantic features of different genres may coincide, the systematic syntactic-semantic analysis is reasonable only within the generic framework.

4. As regards their constitution genres can be divided into comparatively simple and complex ones.
- 4.1. In addition to their homogenous syntactic-semantic structure simple genres are characterized by a unique and delimited strategic move in the language game in which the participants are engaged (e. g. to make the addressee laugh in the case of a joke, to offer him a commonly approved general solution in the case of a proverb, etc.), complex genres embrace several strategic moves of the partners and join up different simple genres in a special unity.
5. The investigation of simple genres has methodological and theoretical priority over the systematic research of complex genres.
6. In view of their pragmatic and other capacities there are sensible differences between certain simple genres. We distinguish:
  - a/ primary simple genres having a fully specific behaviorial and linguistic code of appropriateness. As examples we mention here the Griceian rationalistic conversation with its cooperation principle, the joke, the fictional tale, and - if we leave the complexity of action structure out of consideration - ritual and magical formulae that can be conceived of as speech acts based upon analogy.<sup>42</sup> In each case the rules of the game followed by the participants differ sensibly from the another.

b/ secondary simple genres are subordinated to primary ones as they have no special code of appropriateness and thus are compelled to apply the norms formulated for some fundamental communicative form. In this sense the proverb represents a secondary simple genre, as its use conforms to the rules of conversation.<sup>43</sup>

7. Simple genres - be they primary or secondary ones - represent the institutionalized solutions for storage and continuous transmission of socio-culturally relevant information by means of special reorganization of oral communication and corresponding social norms for the acquisition, training and transference of special communicative forms.
- 7.1. The "grammar" of these simple genres reflects above all rational social decisions concerning the formulation of the text in view of memorizability.
- 7.2. The simple genres can preserve their original function even if oral communication has ceased to be the only possible form of social conservation of relevant information and the importance of the genre is therefore sensibly diminished. The grammar of oral transmission maintains its prestige even if there is no direct social or communicative need of interest in using it, and if the poet undertaking this old oral tradition without any direct practical social goal appears to be carrying out an irrationally free act without any practical interest

with the only aim to please.<sup>44</sup> This idea of poetic freedom not only proves to be originally false through the explanation of poetic grammar as a product of an intentionalized social action motivated by social needs, but even as an illumination for literature in the artistic period, since each poetic manifestation is deeply embedded in stylistic, artistic and ideological codes of communication in the historical process.

8. Taking part in social games has a double sense for narrative (simple) genres: as for any genre it signifies on the one hand their actual way of existence and on the other it points to the structure they reflect syntactically and semantically.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> viz. Posner (1976), Pratt (1977), Fowler (1979)

<sup>2</sup> Fowler (1979) pp. 535-536.

<sup>3</sup> Searle (1975) p. 320.

<sup>4</sup> cf. the impressive critical survey of structural narratology in Bremond (1973) and Bremond's subsequent studies on narrative analysis.

<sup>5</sup> cf. "At a time when the very existence of literature and other forms of art is threatened by commercialism and ideologies, the role of structural poetics as a major force of resistance is becoming more and more important."  
Doležel (1979) p. 529.



- <sup>6</sup> cf. Searle (1975) p. 319.
- <sup>7</sup> Austin (1962)
- <sup>8</sup> ibid p. 22.
- <sup>9</sup> Ohmann (1971 a) p. 14.
- <sup>10</sup> ibid p. 17.
- <sup>11</sup> cf. Ohmann (1971 b), (1974), Campbell (1975)
- <sup>12</sup> Doležel (1979) p. 524.
- <sup>13</sup> Searle (1975) p. 325.
- <sup>14</sup> Grice (1975)
- <sup>15</sup> Castañeda (1975) p. 64.
- <sup>16</sup> Grice (1975) p. 49.
- <sup>17</sup> cf. Grice (1975) p. 48.
- <sup>17a</sup> Wunderlich (1970) p. 101.
- <sup>18</sup> cf. in this respect Baumgärtner (1969) where the feature (+ fiction) is substituted by (+ poetry) signifying that "the text has been estimated by an institution in the largest sense of the word to belong to poetry" Baumgärtner (1969) p. 389. However, this proposition is inconsistent with the central aim of the typological approach as, if we have the feature (+ Poetry), we do not need any other features, for poetry will then be defined not by a complex of supposedly primitive features, but by the feature (+ Poetry) alone. Cf. in this respect the commentary in Ihwe (1972) p. 213f.
- <sup>19</sup> Grice (1975) p. 47.

- 20 cf. Bakhtin (1975 a), Medvedev (1929). In connection with some general consequences of the Bakhtin-critique cf. Kanyó (1980)
- 21 Bierwisch (1975), Kanyó (1977) (1982)
- 22 cf. Vološinov (1929)
- 23 cf. Bakhtin (1975 c)
- 24 Bakhtin (1975 b) p. 75. my own translation
- 25 Ben-Amos (1976) p. xxviii.
- 26 cf. Ben-Amos (1969), Kanyó (1981)
- 27 cf. Köngäs-Maranda - Maranda (1971)
- 28 Hymes (1972) p. 54. in this terminology "speech is ... taken as a surrogate for all forms of language", ibid p. 53.
- 29 cf. Hymes (1972) p. 59ff.
- 30 Hymes (1972) p. 58.
- 31 The questions of innovation and transformability of genres cannot be treated in this respect here cf. Kanyó (1977) (1980) and (1981)
- 32 Abrahams (1969) p. 200.
- 33 Ben-Amos (1969) p. 225.
- 34 cf. Ben-Amos (1969). Kirschenblatt-Gimblett (1975), Scheub (1977)
- 35 cf. Permjakov (1970), Kanyó (1981)
- 36 Lord (1960) p. 14.

- 37 viz. Lord (1960) p. 14ff.
- 38 cf. Lord (1960) p. 30ff.
- 39 Nagler (1967) p. 281.
- 40 Havelock (1977) p. 370.
- 41 cf. Colby - Cole (1973), Finnegan (1973), Goody (1977)
- 42 cf. Tambiah (1973), and an interesting structuralist  
analysis in Todorov (1973)
- 43 cf. Kanyó (1981)
- 44 As to the influence of oral literature on written  
expressions cf. Finnegan (1973)

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